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# Comment 1

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This international workshop was very fulfilling and meaningful because each presentation was original and spread awareness of issues about Islam and gender in Uzbekistan. Although English is not the mother tongue of every speaker and commentator, the discussion in English was very lively and fruitful. It depended much on the organizer, Prof. Obiya's faculty. Four representatives from Uzbekistan were top-ranking researchers in their fields, and they seemed to be satisfied by seeing how under the instruction of Prof. Komatsu, who has built a base of Japanese research for Central Asian Society, new generations of scholars are maturing, and discussions are sometimes held in Uzbek.

My comments and questions for each speaker are as follows.

**For Prof. Obiya:** We should be very careful about whose viewpoint the discussion is based on. In her presentation, clearly, she analyzes official discourse on the veil in Uzbekistan. However, if we try to break through the existing dichotomy of the veil's meanings, we should make it obvious that the meanings of veiling are wide-ranging among Muslim women themselves or maybe even among officials at various levels. Prof. Obiya answered that her next paper would contain some voices of Muslim women who wear veils, and I'm looking forward to reading it and obtaining another perspective on veiling.

**For Prof. Babajanov:** What is the relationship between SADUM and *otines*, who teach Islamic knowledge and hold various rituals among Muslim women at the grass root? According to Profs. Azimova and Kandiyoti (2004), the government of Uzbekistan tries to control *otines*' activities and their operations. He answered the first question that in the Soviet era, *fatwas* by Ishon Bobojonov did not refer to *otines*, maybe because his wife herself was an *otine*. However, his son Ziyauddin gave *fatwas* that criticized *otines*' activities as non-Islamic customs. He attacked various nationwide customs such as *Aqiqa*, *Bibi-Seshanba*, and *Mushkurkushod* etc., but it did not affect society much. To the second question, he told us that there is a madrasa for *otines* in Uzbekistan now. There are three types of degrees there. Today's SADUM or O'MI has released two *fatwas* opposing such a Mawlid, i.e., one held without permission.

**For Prof. Azimova:** In my research field, it seems that young couples depend heavily on their parents financially and physically in everyday life, even if they live separately from them. So what is the meaning of nuclearization in your presentation? Does it not indicate only change of housing? She answered that in recent years, more and more young couples can make decisions by themselves without instructions from their parents in rural Uzbekistan. She sees the beginning of nuclearization in this phenomenon and predicts that after one or two decades, the society of Uzbekistan will change drastically even in rural areas.

**For Dr. Sono:** The meaning or content of "good girl for bride" and "our traditional value" might have undergone change in recent years in Uzbekistan. As in my research field, girls who do not study much and sit at home are no longer much regarded as "good girl for bride" because many people now prefer brides with careers, who can support their family financially and give their children a good education. She answered that in a village of rural Kashkadarya, there are no higher educational institutions, so most girls do not enter a higher-level school and the meaning of "good girl for bride" remains unchanged at present. After hearing this answer and Prof. Azimova's prediction, I think they show the different speeds of globalization and urbanization in urban and rural Uzbekistan.

**For Dr. Wazaki:** According to some works of Razia Sultanova, there are men's *zikr* in the Namangan region. Did you see them? I. M. Lewis analyzed *zikrs* in West Africa and said that women get catharsis from their emotional *zikrs*, while men refrain from showing their emotions in Islamic gatherings. Is this structure of religion also applicable to Uzbekistan? He said that he had heard about men's *zikr* in Namangan, and the participants attested that they obtained ecstasy or emotional relief from their *zikrs*, so that Louis's framework does not fit the case of Uzbekistan.